

## Good Stories for Children

By Walt McDougall

## JESSE HADLEY DISCOVERS MANY STRANGE THINGS IN A TRIP TO THE MOON

ANY years ago when Jesse Trumbull Hadley's father was young he invented a flying machine and had it almost completed when he thought of something else. He put the flying machine away in the garret and soon forgot all about it, but little Jesse, who on rainy days played in the garret, used to crawl over the old rusty machinery so often that he soon came to know every part of it, and when he was about 12 years old he heard so much about flying machines that he resolved to try to finish his father's work so that he, too, could go soaring over the houses and astonish the people of Tuckahoe.

It was no easy task to get the machine down into the yard, but he did it, and for days he tinkered with the rusty wires and plates and bars, but, try as hard as he could, he made no progress toward fitting it for flight. He didn't tell his father what he was doing, but experimented alone and studied books about all sorts of things meanwhile in order to learn what had already been done in that direction. He learned an immense lot about chemistry, mechanics and such things, but he got little that would help him. In his daily experiments he used to try all sorts of queer things, sticking into the vacant spaces of the old machine every possible sort of object, just to see what would happen, and one day he placed in the space between two flat iron plates, in order to hold them apart, a thick piece of glass, upon one side of which had accidentally been stuck a sheet of sticky flypaper. Now, whether it was the glass or the flypaper, or both, that produced the astonishing result, I cannot say, but as soon as the glass had been placed in the machine it suddenly rose into the air with a slow motion and startled Jesse so that he grabbed at it and in trying to hold it down he pulled out the pane of glass.

## Sails Away From Home

The flying machine instantly fell to the ground with a thud, narrowly missing his toes. In a state of mind between astonishment and delight, Jesse inserted the glass again with the same result, and he only managed to get it out as the machine lifted him from the ground. It didn't fly, but just rose straight in the air, and after he had tested it a few times he became convinced that there was something in the glass or the flypaper that caused the Attraction of Gravitation to be abolished or suspended. You may know all about the Attraction of Gravitation, but for fear you do not, I will explain that it is something in the middle of the earth that makes everything draw toward that spot, and if there was a hole clear through the world like a well and you fell into it, you wouldn't fall past the middle of the earth, but just hang there in the centre of the well forever. Nobody knows what makes it do so, but it always does, and before Jesse fixed the flying machinery nobody had ever been able to suspend its action the least mite. He knew at once what a wonderful thing he had done and was awfully tickled, but he determined to test it carefully before he told anybody about his discovery. He got into the car, for that was all there was to the machine, as the balloon part for the gas had never been made, and when he was comfortably seated he placed the glass between the iron plates. Up went the rusty old contrivance like a rubber ball, so suddenly that it almost took his breath away, and in an instant he was as high as the steeple of the church. Then he became a little alarmed and drew out the glass, which caused the car to drop as quickly, but he managed to replace it about halfway and in time to prevent an awful bump, which would surely have wrecked the car and Jesse, also. A few such experiments gave him complete control of the power of Gravitation so that he could shoot up or down at will, but now, such an immense crowd of excited people had gathered in the street that he wanted to move away in order to avoid answering their questions. There was a little windmill affair at the back of the car, but it had not power enough to move it ahead an inch, and he wished that he had made a balloon before he had started off, as the wind was blowing nicely. Then he had another idea, and quickly descending in his own yard he ran into the house and got an umbrella. When he was high in the air again he opened the umbrella and, of course, he promptly sailed away over the city. All the people ran wildly under him, but the wind soon blew too fast for them and he left them far behind. Delighted with his success, he sailed along, rarely going higher than a mile or two, and enjoying the wonderful sensation without realizing how far he was from home and the impossibility of returning unless the wind changed. It was only when he saw that the earth below was in darkness that he came to his senses, for, of course, away up there the sun was still shining. He promptly dropped to the ground and found himself at the gate of a big farm house, at the door of which he knocked. It was opened by a little girl, who said with a smile:

## Saves Two Lives

"I am glad somebody's come at last, for I have waited here for hours. I was lost in the woods and came here to get some one to take me home." When Jesse told her that he didn't belong there, the little girl looked as if she were about to cry, and Jesse added: "I can take you home if the wind changes, but not to-night. Is there anything to eat here?" She said that she had found lots of good things in the pantry, but she didn't want to take them without permission. Jesse didn't have any such scruples, being a boy, and she ate with him. Nobody came and finally they both went to sleep on the sofa and slept soundly until morning. Then something woke Jesse and he listened intently, a little bit alarmed, and then he distinguished a weak voice calling for help. He ran out and soon discovered that the voice came from the well and he called down:

"Who's there?"

"Mr. and Mrs. Pillsbury," was the answer from the deep, dark hole. "Hurry and get help, for we have been here all night and are almost exhausted!" Jesse didn't wait to ask how Mr. and Mrs. Pillsbury came to be in the well, as some people would have done, but ran to his flying machine, dragged it to the well and with the glass in his hand ready to pop into its place he dropped down. He fell a little faster than he thought and bumped Mr. Pillsbury rather hard as he stopped, but as soon as they

The Moon Is, He Finds, Really  
Made of Soft Green  
Cheese



THEY LOOKED OUT OF THE HOLE AND SAW THE EARTH CLEARLY

grabbed the bars of the car he shot up with them and landed them on the grass above before they could let go their grip. Mr. Pillsbury was so astonished that he just stared, but his wife fainted as soon as she was safe, just like a woman. Oh, but they were glad, however, and when Mrs. Pillsbury came to she got Jesse a breakfast that he never forgot. The farmer gave him a gold watch for saving his life, for he was very grateful, and when, after breakfast, Jesse and Jessica, for, strange to say, that was the little girl's name, started off, both the old man and his wife shed tears, for they were almost sure they would both have their little necks broken before the trip was finished. "Shall we go straight home or shall we explore the world a little?" Jesse asked when they were high in the air and Jessica had got used to the new sensation.

"I think that as it is very early, it would be wise to see some of the places they tell about in our geography," she replied, looking down through a hole in a cloud. "I see a big city over yonder and just beyond that looks like a big fair ground."

"Let's go to the fair and give them an exhibition!" cried Jesse, who now was anxious to show off his skill with his wonderful discovery. "That would be fun," Jessica said.

So Jesse tried to draw out the glass and descend at the Fair Grounds, but because of Jessica's added weight, or because of some unknown influence, he found that it wouldn't come out, no matter how hard he tugged at it, and all the time the car was shooting upward at a horrible rate of speed. Both were much alarmed, and Jessica sobbed:

"I told you not to bring me up here! I wish I was back in the woods."

## Lands on the Moon

Now, Jesse would not contradict her and say that she had never said any such thing, for he was very gentlemanly, but he resolved never, never to take a girl out in an airship again. He was struggling with all his might to pull out the glass plate and didn't notice that they were now miles and miles away from the earth, so far away that they could not see the cities at all, and it looked just like a map, with merely a difference between green or brown land and blue water. It was so cold, too, that Jessica's tears froze and fell like hail over the side and shot down like silver bullets. Soon he had to give up and blow on his hands to keep them warm. He began to see that they must surely freeze to death, but fortunately the tremendous speed of the machine as it went through the air caused it to become heated to such an extent that the air inside became like that on a summer afternoon, and they were soon quite comfortable. Soon the great earth looked like a big ball below, and then like a marble, and later like a pill. By and by it became so small that they had hard work to find it if they took their eyes off it for a moment, after which it totally vanished, and then they began to whiz past stars with lightning speed, sometimes coming so close as to brush off stardust with their elbows. It was dark as a deep cellar now, because after one gets away from the atmosphere of the earth all is continual night in space, and it was exceedingly gloomy and uncomfortable for them. Once a big fiery comet chased them for many miles, and passed them with a hissing roar, so close that they could feel the heat from it, and they were almost swept into the mass of fire in its spreading tail.

After they had sailed along for hours, Jesse made another attempt to remove the glass plate, and, perhaps because the car was so hot, it slipped out as easy as winking. For a long time they couldn't tell which way they were going, but suddenly Jessica cried:

"Oh, look! there's the moon below us, and we are going to strike it!"

Jesse looked over the edge and saw the moon, half illuminated by the sun, just beneath. He now realized that the moon had gone around the earth and come to this side since they started, and that therefore they were looking at the side of the moon that is continually turned away from the earth. He decided to land upon the planet and explore its mysteries, and thus became another Columbus. He had hardly made this decision when it became necessary to check their speed to prevent bumping the moon very hard, indeed. They landed on a sort of round-topped hill and sprang out at once. Jessica had scarcely planted her feet upon the moon, when she cried in surprise:

"Oh, Jesse! It's green cheese! Who would have believed it?"

Jesse examined the moon carefully and was compelled to admit that it was certainly made of cheese, and green or fresh cheese at that, in spite of the fact that he had been many times assured to the contrary by people who pretended to know all about the moon. It was cheese, and good eatable cheese at that. The whole country as far as they could see all seemed to be made of it. There was nothing in sight else, and it seemed as though it was a deserted and uninhabitable land, if you can call cheese land.

"There's very little to see here, evidently," remarked Jessica, as she looked around in the queer sort of twilight that always exists on the other side, or dark part, of the moon.

"Perhaps we will discover something more interesting farther on," said Jesse. "We will leave the flying machine here in this hollow and take a walk." He took her hand, and they strolled along a valley for a long distance without seeing anything, but they both noticed at the end that the light seemed to flicker and snap, as it were, just as though invisible lightning flashes were passing through it. As they emerged from the valley they came upon a wide plain, over which several hundred dogs were chasing wildly and with wide-open jaws, as if in the act of barking, although no sounds could be heard. Every time they shut their jaws there was seen the funny flicker in the air, and Jesse felt that it must have something to do with their inaudible barking. Soon all of the dogs scurried away across the dimly lighted plain and vanished.

"I don't believe they were real at all! I think we just dreamed them," said Jessica.

"Well, we can't dream foot-prints!" said Jesse, pointing to the tracks in the cheese at their feet.

Just then a door opened in the ground before them, a door made of cheese-rind, I suppose, and they saw a man looking out at them with a puzzled expression on his face. In describing him afterward neither could agree as to exactly how he looked, and it's a curious fact that everybody describes the man in the moon differently. No two people seem to see him exactly the same. This was he, and he was amazed to see two such strange creatures on his planet.

"Who are you and whence come you?" he asked, when he had got his breath.

"I may as well ask you the same question?" replied Jesse.

"Oh, everybody knows that I'm the Man!" he answered.

"Not the Old Man in the Moon?" cried Jesse.

"The same," he said with some dignity. "And now will you kindly inform me who and what you are?"

"We are also men and women—small ones," said Jesse. "They call us a boy and a girl on the earth."

The Man seemed startled. He asked nervously: "Why are you here? You are come to crowd me out, to push me to the wall, I suppose?"

"No, indeed," said Jessica quickly; "we are just visitin' round and don't intend to stay. We only want to see the moon, that's all."

He smiled then and said:

"If that's all, you are welcome. So you are really from the earth! Well, they say I came from there myself, sent here for chopping wood on Sunday, but I have no recollection of it."

"You must have been here a very long time," said Jesse, as he examined what was visible of the Man. He seemed like a great mass of dough that changed its shape constantly, yet always seemed to resemble a man. "Can you come out and walk along with us and show us the country?"

"I'll roll a little way with you," replied the Man, and he emerged from the hole completely and seemed more like dough than before. He had no arms or legs, but rolled along like a round lump of putty beside them, and at first Jessica was a little frightened. I say rolled, but his was rather a sort of spinning motion like a pudgy top, but he kept up with them easily, talking all the time.

When Jessica asked him about the dogs he said they were Moon-dogs, and were baying at the dogs on the earth, which they did every night.

"Why, our dogs do the very same thing!" cried Jesse; "but ours make a noise!"

"So do ours, but it's a noiseless noise, as it were," replied the Man, smiling. "The sound can't be heard,

And There is a Man in the  
Moon Who Has Fun  
With Us

said Jesse; "and I think that's what's the matter. What are they?"

"Why, didn't you see? They are the fairies who once lived on the earth until the people began to teach the children that there were no such things, and then, naturally, they got mad and left, coming up, or I should say, sliding down, to the moon on greased moonbeams. They seem to have plenty of fun here and don't regret leaving the earth, I guess."

"Gee!" said Jesse. "What a shame! Think of all the wishes we might have had, any time, if they'd stayed!" He reached out his hand and tried to clutch one of the pallid toadstools, but it slipped out of his grasp like water. Then all of them suddenly vanished.

"You'll see them no more—not as toadstools, anyway!" said the Man; "for they'll take some other form and fool you!"

"It would be just lovely," said Jessica, thoughtfully, "to be good friends with them."

"Not a bit of it! They never do anything useful, and are always playing silly pranks on each other and on me, too, which is shameful," replied the Man. "Come along and forget them."

## He Views the Earth

They soon came to a great circular opening at their feet, through which poured the sunlight, and both started back as they looked down and saw the earth below bathed in pale moonlight. They could distinctly see people walking along the seashore, lovers who imagined no one was looking, burglars breaking into houses, policemen sleeping on their beats, boys reading in bed, girls talking out of windows to boys, and all sorts of people doing things that they imagined were hidden from all eyes. The Man chuckled as he said:

"Now, you see what is revealed every night to the Man in the Moon, eh? Little do all those people think my eye is on 'em, do they? But it is, all the time. It's half the fun I have up here."

"What's the other half?" asked Jesse as he watched a man trying to unlock his front door with a corkscrew.

"Making the tides come up on people sitting too close to the water. It's bully fun, but they are getting pretty spry of late. I don't often catch them nowadays, and soak 'em, as I use to. They seem to know more about the tides and such things lately."

"Cause they give Almanacs away free, now," said Jessica. "My pa prints them for Googoo's Malarial Specific, and we have lots of them home."

"What's an Almanac?" asked the Man.

"It's an Almanac, and it tells you when it's high tide and when the moon's full, and what to take for what ails you?" she said.

"Huh!" snorted the Man. "Can't they look up and see when the moon's full, I'd like to know?"

"Yes; but the Almanac tells you months before, and it always is so," said Jesse. "I can find out when it's high tide next Christmas, if I want to."

"That's more than I can myself," said the Man wonderingly.

"Did you make this big hole?" asked Jessica to divert his thoughts.

"Why, of course not! All these holes are made by the moon-mole, an enormous animal that goes rooting around inside, constantly coming out just where you never expect him, and pretty nearly catching you each time. Can't you see his holes from the earth?"

"Yes; but we are told that they are craters of extinct volcanoes," replied Jesse. "They certainly do look like molehills, though."

"That's what they are," said the man, "and I only hope he doesn't make one while you are here."

Jessica shivered. "Let's go back," she whispered, clutching Jesse's arm.

"Let us walk out in the light," said Jesse, and the man led the way through the great hole.

All the way back they kept their eyes upon the great round earth above them, and wondered how it was possible to see things so distinctly, but the man could not explain it, nor can they to this day. They were almost at the car, when suddenly the ground behind them rose up in a gigantic hill, all crumbly and shaking. The man spun faster, and cried out: "Hurry! It's the mole! He's heard us talking!"

## Comes Back to Earth Again

They ran with all speed and jumped into the car. In his excitement the man sprang in also. Jesse jabbed the glass plate into place in a dreadful haste, and the car shot away from the moon's surface just in time to escape the great claws of the angry moon mole, who sprang high in the air after them, but missed them by an inch. Jessica emitted a great sigh of relief as she saw him fall with a dull thud on the cheesy ground, and in another minute they were far away from the moon. Then the man suddenly realized that he was being carried away to earth, and he shouted, excitedly:

"Hi! Gosh! You're taking me away! Let me out!" He climbed over the side hastily.

"Stop! Don't jump! You'll get killed!" cried Jesse, trying to hold him back, but so much of him had gotten over that it was impossible to hold him. Jessica grasped him by his coat, but he slid through their hands and fell, leaving seven large buttons in their grasp. They watched him until he struck the surface, when he flattened out like an enormous pancake.

"Oh! He's certainly dead!" cried Jessica.

But he was not. He gathered himself up almost instantly and looked up at them and laughed, so they knew he wasn't much hurt, if at all, and then a cloud came between them, and they saw no more of the Man in the Moon. At least not until afterward, when they saw him from their own window. When they lost sight of him Jessica looked at the buttons which she held, and asked Jesse what they were made of. He had a few, but didn't know what they were. They resolved always to preserve them as souvenirs of their voyage, but when they got home that day (and they had no trouble at all about that) they soon learned that the buttons were beautiful moonstones and very, very valuable, so that by selling only four of them they became exceedingly wealthy, and Jesse now has so much money that he can experiment constantly upon all sorts of airships, and everybody knows that's more expensive than anything in the whole world.

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